VOL. 01
Fur Lord Zine
Gabe

2.3-MILE OUT-AND-BACK NEAR JULIAN CLIMBS A ROCKY PATH TO A SCENIC SUMMIT, CROSSING THE **PACIFIC CREST TRAIL** ALONG THE WAY.

GARNET PEAK

ESTATES
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Places You Should Go: Barona Speedway

Barona Speedway is an eighth-mile oval track tucked up in the mountains of East County, San Diego. It's about a **40-minute drive** from the city, and honestly, the road up there is part of the fun.

So, what's the deal?
Barona is **grassroots** racing at its finest. This is multi-category oval dirt racing, where you'll see everything from Civics and Ford Focuses battling it out to 1950s-style cars that look cyberpunked-out—plus a solid lineup of '70s NASCAR throwbacks tearing through the dirt.
It's a good time.

Tickets? **Ten bucks a person.**

It's also **BYOB**, so bring a cooler with whatever you want. But if you didn't come prepared, there's a food stand serving up **burgers, ice cream, Gatorade, Red Bull**—you know the deal.

As a brown person with a white partner, I never felt uncomfortable, though I was definitely unique in the crowd. This is the high-vis and camo kind of scene, but **everyone was friendly and welcoming.**

The racing itself? **Chaotic, amateur, and fun**. A lot goes wrong. That's part of the charm. You'll also get to see kids' races, where young drivers are learning the ropes before they move up to the big leagues. Always cool to see the next generation of racers in action.

Barona Speedway seems to be **entirely volunteer-run**, which makes it even better. It's rare to find real grassroots racing this close to a major city, so if you're into cars, speed, or just a good, weird time, go check it out.

https://baronaspeedway.com/
Address: 1754 Wildcat Canyon Rd, Lakeside, CA 92040

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HAPPY TO BE THERE

I've been a **New York Red Bulls** fan since **2006**, a lifelong lover of soccer who grew up in **New York** and found that, for better or worse, this was the local team.

I followed them through 2007 and the **Beckham** game, when **Giants Stadium** sold out for **David Beckham's** first visit to **New York**. Back then, we called it the "One Percent Derby"—**Galaxy vs. Red Bulls**. That game ended 5-4, with **Juan Pablo Ángel** playing out of his mind and **Jozy Altidore** in his youthful prime. It was enough to inspire a very sheltered 16-year-old me to find his way to East **Rutherford, New Jersey.**

My first actual trip to the stadium wouldn't happen until the 2008 season, when I told my mom I was going to see a friend, and instead took the subway, NJ Transit, and the shuttle to watch **Red Bulls vs. Columbus Crew.** It turned out to be a perfect game to pick—three **Venezuelan** players were on the field that night. I got there early, wearing my **Vinotinto** jersey, and handed it to **El Zurdo Rojas**, who passed it over to **Gabriel Cichero** and **Alejandro Moreno** of **Columbus Crew** (now of ESPN FC fame).

That year, **The Red Bulls** made an improbable run to the **MLS Cup Final**, beating a stacked **Houston Dynamo** team and an even better **Real Salt Lake** team on the road to win the **Western Conference Championship** (yes, MLS was weird back then).

They had no chance.

It was a warm afternoon in **Carson**, where a half-empty stadium, and a dominant **Columbus Crew** side awaited. John Wolyniec gave us a little hope, but 90 seconds later, it was gone. The **Red Bulls** lost 3-1.

The years that followed were **MLS 2.0** weird.

- 2009 was so bad they won four games.
- 2010 brought **Thierry Henry** to open **Red Bull Arena**, alongside **Juan Pablo Ángel** in his final season.
- 2011–2014 had some legends—The aforementioned **Henry, Tim Cahill, Joel Lindpere** (who scored the first goal at **Red Bull Arena**), and a rotating cast of unforgettable but mostly forgettable MLS players. Always a goal, or a **Jermaine Jones'** kick to the chest, short.

This was when I followed the team the least. **Henry** was a superstar, but I was a broke college student, with no way to watch the league and no money to go to games.

2015–2018 changed everything.

- I started working and could finally afford going to games.
- **Jesse Marsch** took over, and the team became a winner.
- The team won the **Shield in 2015 and again in 2018**, and for a few years, every home game felt like a guaranteed **Bradley Wright-Phillips** goal and a win.
- Then came 2018 and the heartbreak—**Kemar Lawrence** got injured, **Connor Lade** got exposed, **Atlanta** took us out, and went on to win **MLS Cup** themselves.

Since then? Mediocrity. **Armas, Carnell, Struber, Lesesne.**

The team would have moments of hope, but they always came up short in the playoffs.

Then came 2024. New season. New coach. Same team, mostly.

I watched one of the first preseason games at the Coachella Valley Invitational—and was not impressed. It looked like another **Struber** team.

Then they started strong. They played attractive soccer, **Sandro-ball** was something we hadn't seen in years. But when summer came? The usual summer slump. One win in 14 games. And yet, somehow, they still snuck into the playoffs—for the 15th season in a row.

What happened next? Absurd.

- We beat **Columbus**, a team we had no business beating.
- We went away to play our biggest rivals in the most stressful game of my life—and won.
- We played **Orlando**, a team that once beat us 5-2 in the Open Cup—and **Andrés Reyes** rose up and sent us to the final.

The **MLS Cup Final.**

Against the **LA Galaxy.**

The final was in Los Angeles, the same place we lost in 2008. Only this time, it was just a few hundred miles from me in San Diego. I couldn't believe it.

I was going to see my team in an **MLS Cup Final.**

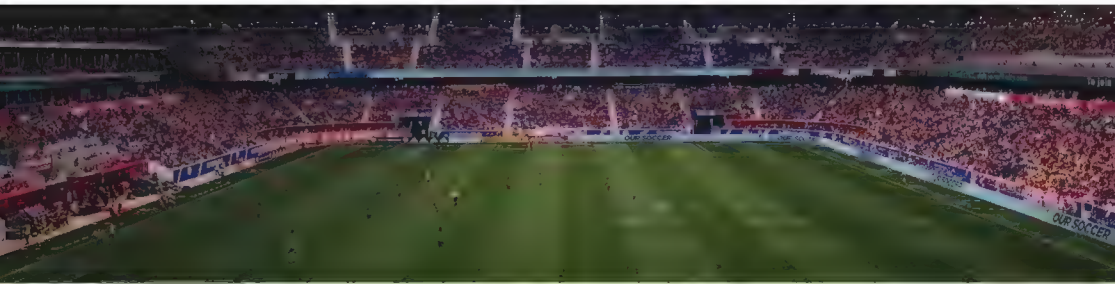
The day was a mix of nerves and excitement. I got to see longtime friends, meet internet friends in real life for the first time, and just soak in the moment.

The game itself? Over in 20 minutes.

- The **Galaxy** scored two early goals, and drowned us in Kendrick screaming **MUUUUSTARRD**. Could've been three, maybe four.
- We clawed one back, but at the end, it was a respectable 2-1 loss.

We tried. It was stressful. It was sad.

But standing there, in the stadium, with my people and my team, I couldn't help but just be **happy to be there.**



GOSSIP GIRL IS A DOCUMENTARY

Now, obviously, that's a ridiculous statement.

The 2007 mildly popular at the time but somehow still omnipresent show **Gossip Girl** is, technically, fiction. It's not real. The people aren't real. The stories? Not technically real.

However.

It's not as outlandish as people claim.

A lot of Gossip Girl criticism boils down to: "This world is so unrealistic! Sixteen-year-olds drinking and partying with personal drivers? Absurd!"

To which I say: What are you talking about? That was all **real.**

There have always been absurdly wealthy people on the **Upper East Side**. And let's be honest—teenagers drinking and partying is not some elite, secret-society experience.

It's a **universal pastime.**

For most, it's cheap vodka in a water bottle in a friend's garage. For others, it's a penthouse soirée catered by **Cipriani**. And if you're really rich? Every door opens for you.

So, item one: **very realistic.**

Another big complaint? The sheer opulence. The money. The fact that teenagers have **chauffeured** town cars on call.

Guess what? That's also real.

Sure, they're not rolling around in limousines anymore. But have you ever been near an **Upper East Side** private school at pickup time? Dozens of black Escalades. All waiting for Upper East Side princelings to emerge.

Somewhere in Manhattan, right now, a kid named **Chuck**, with an expensive drug habit, is texting a driver named Arthur, telling him to pull up ten blocks so he can see his **Blair.**

Very. Real.

Now, I wasn't going to get into the whole "everyone is dating everyone and doing horrible things to each other" thing, but actually? **I am.**

That's real, too.

High schoolers —**people**—are messy. Everyone dated everyone. You'd have a thing with someone, stop talking, become besties with their ex, repeat.

The only difference? You couldn't sell your girlfriend for a hotel because **you were poor.**

So, yet another point for realism.

Maybe Gossip Girl **is** a documentary after all.

CANCELED: PUBLIC BATHROOMS

Much has been, uh, said about the debate between gendered public bathrooms and who is allowed to go into which one.

And, you know, I think the problem really starts with **bathrooms.**

Bathrooms are such an interesting thing because when we're at home, if there's one other person there, we go in, close the door, and pee as quietly as we can. But in public? We've just **accepted** that we're all using shared facilities **at the same time**. That's just **gross.**

So how do you fix the problem of who's allowed in which bathroom?

Everyone **Together**, but **very separate.**

Some of my best nights—funniest stories, even—have happened in the lines **outside** of bathrooms, where the **groups mix**. Good stories are told, funny jokes, **no weirdness**. Just people waiting to pee, bonding over the shared experience of **waiting to pee.**

That said, public bathrooms are still a **horrible** experience.

I think all public bathrooms should be **required** to have fully **enclosed stalls with real doors**. If a place has three stalls, it should have three mini rooms where you go in, **lock the door**, and enjoy privacy.

Preferably, these rooms are **soundproof** and have amazing exhaust fans—but, you know, **baby steps.**

In the meantime—**who cares?** We're all just trying to pee, dawg. It's already awkward enough.

THANK YOU FOR READING THE FIRST ISSUE OF FUN/HARD ZINE.

THIS ZINE IS A PROJECT BORN OUT OF THE DESIRE TO CREATE MORE AND CONSUME LESS.

FUN/HARD COMES FROM MY BELIEF THAT MOST THINGS THAT ARE HARD ARE ALSO FUN— WHETHER IT'S LEARNING A NEW SKILL, TRAINING FOR A TRIATHLON, OR MAKING A ZINE. THEY ALL TAKE EFFORT, THE PAYOFF IS GREAT, AND THE PROCESS IS FUN.

THIS SPACE IS OPEN FOR COLLABORATION. IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE OR ANY FEEDBACK FOR ME, REACH OUT AT GABE@FUNHARDZINE.COM, AND LET'S GET TALKING.

THANK YOU,
GABE

funhardzine.com

Fun Hard Zine is a personal zine by Gabe Liendo. Published in San Diego, CA.

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